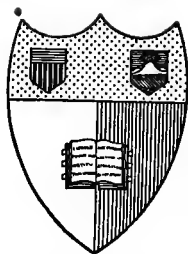


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IN
RHYME

DONALD ROBERTSON



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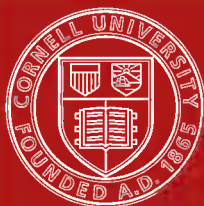
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1. Palmer

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FR.

Feb. 1st 1904.

IMPRESSIONS

IN

RHYME.

BY

DONALD ROBERTSON.

NEW YORK:
THE GILLIN PRINTING COMPANY.



L.
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*In Beauty's name, the Truth was told
By Artists in the days of old,
Then, hearts were lifted and made free
And fearless, as the open sea,
That none can tame.*

*Now, men, in times of strife for gold,
With eyes grown heavy, hearts grown cold,
Forget how they gained Liberty
In Beauty's name.*

*Shall I be counted overbold,
Who pour my thoughts into the mould
Of simple Rhymes ? If, tremblingly,
I dare to speak of Harmony
And bid men's eyes to Truth unfold
In Beauty's name ?*

Tant Mieux.

"Tant pis and tant mieux being two of the great hinges in French conversation,"

LAWRENCE STERNE, "Sentimental Journey."

The story of this simple scroll
Is not from Fame's long rigmarole,
It's somewhat queer and rather droll,
It's true ;
"Its chance of hearing then is small,"
Said someone whom I won't recall ;
Eh? "Come on, let us hear it all,"
Tant Mieux.

I'll be as brief, then, as I can,
And tell the story of a man
Whose life was made upon a plan
Not new,
A life with no desire for state
Or rank, or what the world calls great ;
He held that God controlled his fate,
Tant Mieux.

I met him first in student days—
When life seemed set to roundelays,
That sang of nothing but Love's praise ;
Echew !

Why even now, sometimes, he seems
Part of the rainbow colored dreams,
That from the past shed gentle beams,
Tant Mieux.

He lived up in a garret, high,
Where he could see the swallows fly
Across the housetops, near the sky
So blue ;
For fifty years, from sun to sun,
He toiled, until his glass was run,
And then he said "Thy will be done,
Tant Mieux."

A singing soul had Jean Laplace,
And so you see it came to pass,
That music, sweet as sprinkled grass
With dew
He wrote, and sold too, it appears;
While 'round his heart, delicious tears
Kept fresh his nature all these years,
Tant Mieux.

A thin old man whose gentle eyes,
Had never lost the first surprise,
With which they saw Life's morning rise
In view ;
Of summer's heat, of winter's snow,
He always said "'Tis better so,"
Or words to that effect, you know,
"Tant Mieux."

He came while quite a lad, you see
Up from the South to "beau Paris,"
And none more pure, more good than he,
More true,
Have set aside all thoughts of gain,
Have made a pleasure out of pain,
Have had, to all their thoughts, refrain,
Tant Mieux.

He loved once, with a boy's strong might,
A maid as pure as virgin light,
That wells forever from God's sight
Anew ;
To him she seemed a holy thing,
Sent here to do God's minis'tring,
And all the airs of Heaven to bring,
Tant Mieux.

Here he wrote music by the sheet,
It was not strong, but oh, 'twas sweet
As babbling brooks, or rustling wheat,
And you !
If you had heard his old violin
Disperse the darkening clouds of sin,
You ever after would have been,
Tant Mieux.

Year after year, earn what he could,
It scarcely paid the price of food,
Of scanty raiment, coal and wood ;
He grew
Year after year more gray and bent,
But never from his heart was sent
A word to Heaven of discontent,
Tant Mieux.

And then when nigh to death he lay,
On mercy's errand bent, one day
An old nun came, and strange to say
'Twas Lou ;
Back from his face his hair he cast,
And o'er his eyes his fingers passed,
And then he said " You've come at last,"
Tant Mieux.

She, mid her tears, "Jean, you believe!"
"Ah, yes," he said, "there, there, don't grieve,
I've nothing on this earth to leave

But you."

And then 'twixt dreams and mem'ries riven,
He whispered out the word "Forgiven,"
And then—"We meet again in Heaven,
Tant Mieux."

Tant Pis.

In truth this is a sad story,
With neither mirth nor mystery,
A woman with a history,
Ah me !
Too plentiful her kind you say,
The miserable, rank mud-spray,
Dashed from the mad wave of their day,
Tant Pis.

From childhood she had had no guide,
Her father fought for France, and died,
Her mother, but a year old bride,
To be,
Beside him followed, and then came
A lonely girlhood, then—why name
The bitter hours that brought her shame,
Tant Pis.

Enough that when I met her, gone
Was all the fragrant blushing dawn
Of modest maidenhood, and on
Julie,
That was the name men knew her by,
Despair had settled, like a sky
Opaqued with clouds her life, you sigh
Tant Pis

For this poor painted chaos, well
T'was sad, for still within her Hell
Sometimes she dreamed of Heaven ; they tell

How she

When once a man to gain her grace,
Said "Pure wives envy you your place,"
Made answer with a tear-stained face,

"Tant Pis."

Her life nigh gone, companions sent
For Rome's absolving sacrament,
The good priest said "Ah, girl, repent,

And see

A new life dawn on you through faith ;"
But wearied out, just at her death,
She whispered low, with her last breath

"Tant Pis."

My Lady.

Sweeter than music of mermaids at midnight,
 Chanting their spells to the soul of the sea ;
Sweeter than welcome of wee birds to daylight
 Is your voice to me.

Fairer than Spring's coy glance to the woodlands,
 Dimpling with green all the scenes of the lea ;
Fairer than froth of the sea to the gray sands
 Is your face to me.

Symbol and sign of the world's fairest features,
 Holy as Christ is to humanity ;
Awful as God is to all of his creatures
 Are you, you, to me.

In the Days that Never Come to Pass.

In the lands that lie beyond to-morrow,
I shall woo and win a pretty lass ;
And our hearts shall never know a sorrow,
In the days that never come to pass.

Near to babbling brooks of liquid laughter,
We shall roam among the scented grass ;
And be happy, happy ever after,
In the days that never come to pass.

Truth will then be not so hard a riddle,
Not as now, seen darkly in a glass ;
Love will make for Life a perfect idyl,
In the days that never come to pass.

Thus I sang when faith seemed one with folly,
Days that come to all of us, alas !
Now I think it may be melancholy,
Waits in days that never come to pass.

My Sweetheart.

My sweetheart is very sly,
 Oh ! the pet ;
From the corner of her eye,
 The coquette,
Sent to my poor heart a glance,
Well, I think called Cupid's lance,
Leading me a merry dance,
 Woe's me yet.

My sweetheart is wondrous fair,
 Soul's surprise !
Sifted sunshine in her hair,
 And her eyes
Clearer are than filtered light,
Drawn from out the stars of night,
Sprinkled o'er the infinite
 Bent blue skies.

To her wrong does not exist,
 Guile nor art,
Light and sweetness both have kissed
 Her pure heart ;
Mingling music up with mirth,
Ever since her blessed birth,
On this glorious, great, green earth,
 Is her part.

My sweetheart is nearly four
Years of age,
But of wisdom she has more
Than the sage ;
Who a heavy soul has sent,
Into wordy argument,
Or for many a year has bent,
O'er dull page.

From the Giver of all Life,
My soul's star,
He who rules both peace and strife,
Near or far
This one boon I beg for you,
Clear celestial drop of dew,
That he still may keep you true,
As you are.

•

Follow the Leader.

Both in and out,
And round about,
To Nature's changing tune,
The Month's have danced,
And skipped and pranced,
'Till July's near to June.

By mossy creek,
And icy peak,
At follow-lead they've played,
Now witching May,
Across the clay,
Runs after April's shade.

The laughing Sun,
His work well done,
From his wide realm looks down,
And sees June wear,
Twined in her hair,
His roses for a crown.

But bold July,
With jealous eye,
Says "Turn, your Majesty,"
Alas ! Alack !
Just at her back,
Says August "Turn to me."

And then ere long,
With chime and song,
In nature's ermine, snow,
A joyous band
Will countermand
The cry of those that go.

In roses white
And red bedight,
Still June however glows,
And yet awhile
She wears his smile,
The Sun's smile, a red rose.

LOVE'S COMING.

When first through silence sound was heard,
 And Life began to smile.
On wings of light a little word,
When first through silence sound was heard,
Came fluttering earth-ward like a bird,
 To rule and reconcile.
When first through silence sound was heard,
 And Life began to smile.

DREAM BLISS.

When on thy face a smile alights,
 And twitters round thine eyes,
My soul in dreamy bliss delights,
When on thy face a smile alights,
Rememb'ring not Nirvana nights,
 It peeps at Paradise.
When on thy face a smile alights,
 And twitters round thine eyes.

A THOUGHT.

When we dream that we dream cometh dawn,
When we doubt that we doubt cometh death,
When we hope that we hope dusk is on,
When we fear *only* fear we draw breath.

A Quartette.

Shakespeare.

He hears the beat of the heart of things,
He looks at God, and of Peace he sings.

Murillo.

In the innocent face of a fair little child,
In the wondering eyes of a maid,
In the death of the sun and the birth of the moon,
There thy name, Murillo, can be read.

Carlyle.

A weary-hearted Ishmalite,
Believing Duty infinite,
Cried passionately day and night,
“Oh, men, fear wrong, and do what’s right.”

Schubert.

With whispered words, that winds cajole
From forest glooms and glades,
He taught, with just a touch of dole,
Love’s lesson unto maids ;
With gentle air made musical,
He drove despair away,
And with a maiden’s madrigal,
He taught men how to pray.

Christopher Hodge.

He was all a mistake, a fellow I knew,
From beginning to end, if you looked all through
 The life-record of times gone by,
I have doubts if you found there so odd a case,
As this fellow I knew, with a scholar's face,
 And whose life was a deep, long sigh.

Would you like me to tell what I know of him?
It might raise up a pitying thought, tear-dim,
 Or perchance be counted a bore ;
No ! I hope if it's that, you will say " Enough "
When you please, time is short, why waste it on stuff
 That kills time, and does nothing more.

To begin, I have heard, that his birth was bane
To his father, a man of old books, nor gain
 To his mother, unloved, unblessed ;
Who had plucked, in the dawn, from the flowers that grew
By her way, and alas, not lillies but rue
 She had clasped to her throbbing breast.

She had been but a poor light plaything of sin,
Drifting down to the sea, the great sea, wherein
Time's impurities all are lost.

But I think she looked back, with a longing eye,
To the pastures of peace she had left, Ai ! ai !
For the waves that are passion tossed.

Of his father, this much, be the rest forgot,
In a rebel moment of life, he begot
The poor friend, that I afterwards knew ;
Then he burrowed for truth in his books again,
And he lost all compassion and touch with men,
Aye, and lost himself somehow, too.

The lad's age was eighteen when the father died,
The poor woman went out on an ebbing tide
Before that, and Christopher Hodge
Was alone in the world with his mother's name,
And a crave for the pure, and a sense of shame,
That had come in his soul to lodge.

At a school in the country he lived till then,
Where they taught him the use of his tongue and pen,
Where they saw all the strength he lacked,
To supply, not develope, was their one way,
Some think it the best for the world's work-a-day,
Being finite as any fact.

In the ignorant bliss of unthinking youth
He came up to the city, and learned the truth
Of his birth, like a lightning flash
It scorched hope in his soul and put out the Sun,
For the future seemed all by the past undone,
And the world round his ears a-crash.

“For what use ! for what use is my life,” he cried,
And the devil, astride of his heart, replied,
“To enjoy the sweet juice I wring
From the days that I pluck from the vine of Time ;
So fill up a bumper, and drink deep, and rhyme
Me a rhyme to the tune I sing.”

Well, he drank and he danced 'till his young blood boiled,
Every pleasure the body could give, despoiled,
As he clutched at the hours' delight,
Made a dash from himself, and with spurs of fire
Dug the flanks of the courser he rode, Desire,
Far into the shadow of night.

Rode on faster and faster, until at last
He was thrown in the dark, with the hateful Past
At his throat like a Nemesis,
Reawakened from out of the Infinite,
And refreshed for the sleep he had given it,
On his face he could feel it hiss.

“Now, Sir Fool, you are mine, just to break or bend
As I will, ’till the days of your life shall end,
And the dust takes again its dust ;
Through the dim dismal glass of a might-have-been,
You shall see afar off in a mist of sin,
O’er the body of Love stand Lust.”

For a space on his soul fell a clammy chill,
And he shut his eyes tight, but the fiend was still
By his side, saying, “ You are mine,
Through the low lying lands of despair and slush,
I shall bid you laugh wildly, I’ll bid you hush,
What I will, you shall do, in fine.”

As the goad that enrages a captive bull,
’Till its poor bursting brain with its blood is full,
And its wild eyes glitter and shine,
So the quick of his soul by that thought was touched,
And he sprang to his feet and the fiend’s throat clutched,
And cried, “ No ! by God, you are mine.”

And he wrestled and fought ’till his foe lay dead
At his feet, and alone in the dark, he said,
“ God help me,” then lo ! in the east
There arose a Hope-herald, rose-crowned, with light
On it’s face, and with peace in it’s hand, and night,
And the darkness of doubting, ceased.

Now I think it was then, he found out this truth,
That he ought to have learned in his early youth,
 In the years that promise and pass,
That a shadow is but the effect of light,
But a stain may be like, yet is unlike quite,
 Aye, and different quite, alas !

But be that as it may he took up his life
And he worked, though his works swallowed up in strife,
 Seemed like still-born deeds of a dream,
For he met with the cynical smile and sneer,
In this age of thin varnish o'er thin veneer,
 In this age trying hard to seem.

Ere the hard hand of habit at last was laid
On his heart, and unchallenged he heard it said,
 "Starve on fancies, men live on facts."
The old crave for the pure repossessed his soul,
And an unfulfilled feeling ran through the whole
 Cause and compass of all his acts.

He was not quite enough for himself you see,
And for such a heart only can heart-help be,
 With respect tying Love's shoe-string.
So it chanced, he met a young maid, passing fair,
With dark-lined, peering eyes and a wealth of hair,
 And a mouth that might make sorrow sing.

And they loved each the other completely, well,
In the circle Fate drew round their lives, a spell
 Of dream-bliss soothed and hallowed all ;
The fringe of a cloud is the gift of the Sun,
So the light that lay round them seemed sent from One
 That doth mark e'en the sparrow's fall.

You might search o'er the earth, and no one, I ween,
More contentedly glad, could by you be seen,
 Than was Christopher Hodge, that day
When he called her his wife—his wife,—Paradise
Seemed to open before his bewildered eyes,
 And his thankful heart knelt to pray.

Here at last was the pure his own, very own,
A fit jewel to gem the arm of the Throne,
 A glory, a gladness, for aye,
And by day and by night he strove after grace,
To be worthy to look on her pale, pure face,
 Hear her voice, soft as Love's own lay.

Every yearning his heart had was toward the good,
To be rapt and entranced in a heavenly mood,
 To be near her his high Ideal ;
To have soul clasp the soul as the flesh had done,
And be, past all Time's limits, entirely one,
 And be sure that that hope was real.

In the white-heat of such an intense man's life,
All she had been and was and should be, his wife
 Brooded over, it urged her on,
Enticed her, compelled her to make herself known,
To reveal, aye, though Heaven and earth should moan,
 What she was in her life's gray dawn.

In the shivering gloom of an autumn night,
She said, "Chris, I was not all you thought, a blight
 Smirched my life, in the days gone by;
Tears and prayers of repentance at last brought peace,
"Till you came and believed in me, bid me cease,
 To live on, but believe no lie."

The thud, thud of his heart, thud on thud repeat
He could hear, and it seemed like the dull drum-beat
 Of the funeral march of Hope.
Then his eyes came from vacancy and said, "Live!"
And his lips, ashen white, said, "I—I forgive—
 To the light, to the light we grope."

And well nigh to a year, they trudged side by side
Up the hills to the Light, and in truth defied
 The grim thoughts that unasked would come
When o' nights they would sit and a silence fall,
And a ghost of the past write upon the wall
 "You must think though you both are dumb."

Then the tired woman sickened and turned her eyes
To the east, and a faint smile of sweet surprise
 Seemed to light up their filmy grey ;
And her husband bent low, and she said—"one kiss,"
And then quietly, gently, "I loved you, Chris"—
 The next moment she was away.

For a day and a night he sat there alone
With his dead, like his dead turned all into stone,
 Dead to hope and to fear alike.
Then he rose and cried, "God ! if a God there be,
Answer this, why you make me a mockery,
 Is there nothing Godlike to strike ?"

"You shall not, by this knife in my clenched right hand,
Try me more, I have striven to understand,
 But I cannot, this life of pain ;
Now I come—list ! have mercy, and grant this prayer,
All I ask, may we not know each other there,
 Only love, only love remain."

He was all a mistake, from the first to last,
As I said, and his work was as thin dust cast
 In the face of a fierce north gale ;
All a strange sad mistake from his very birth,
And the passionate sun and the patient earth,
 Saw him struggle awhile and fail.

Romance.

With music, with mirth and with gladness,
Young Summer arose from her lair ;
Arrayed in bright sunshine and shadows,
She sauntered across the green meadows,
And fastened a rose in her hair.

From woods where the winds sing of sadness
Lone Autumn beheld her and sighed ;
Then ran to her, caught her, caressed her,
And called her his own as he pressed her,
She smiled on him once and so died.

To him came an infinite sorrow,
And by her he laid himself low ;
Then Winter came down from the mountains
And seeing them hushed all the fountains,
And covered them over with snow.

Beside them he watched, 'till one morrow
The child Spring came, fresh as a wave ;
And when she had heard their sad story
Child-like for a space she felt sorry,
Then planted snowdrops on their grave.

Hush !

Slumber softly babe upon my breast,
Shadows beckon all the world to rest,
Day is dreaming in the arms of Night,
Stars are watching o'er it with delight.
Hush ! love's watch I will keep
Hush-a-bye baby, sleep.

Pillowed softly on the soul of Peace,
You shall dream of lands where sorrows cease,
Where love lingers clothed in shining youth,
Christ has told us is the garb of Truth.
Hush ! love's watch I will keep
Hush-a-bye baby, sleep.

Folded softly in a perfect calm,
Rest 'till morning, my heart's own love-lamb.
When Dawn heralds up the heavens run
Wake, and with them hail the rising Sun.
Hush ! love's watch I will keep
Hush-a-bye baby, sleep.

The Dawn Fairy.

A Fairy came from out the land
Of fair-faced dreams, it held a wand
Of scented sunbeams in it's hand—
Upon it's head a coronet
Of silvery thistle down, beset
With dew drops from a violet.
The robes of mist in which 'twas dressed
Dye from a maiden's blushes pressed
Had tinted pearly pink—It's breast
Was beautiful as Youth—It's feet
With fire-flies wings were shod that beat
The air to music. Sweet, oh, sweet
To me, as Light to Life, were those
Pure notes that like faint odor rose
And fell around me; 'ere their close
The Fairy vanished, but though gone
It left a voice. that smote upon
My heart the words "I was your Dawn."

“As You Were.”

When Hope with humid breath comes whispering,
 (And arms are shouldered for the coming fray)
 “Forget the strife awhile, beyond to day,
 Beside a lily-margined well,
 Enchanted by a mystic spell,
Fond Love is list'ning to the voice of Spring ;”
 Then Duty calls out, “As you were.”

When Liberty with soul-inspiring voice,
 (And arms presented, front the raging fight)
 “Step forth and battle only for the right,
 Unheedful of the little herd,
 Raise up your hand and strongest word
For Truth alone, and in that Truth rejoice.”
 Then Habit calls out, “As you were.”

When Life with heavy sighs says wearily,
 (And arms are stacked beside the spent camp fire)
 “Brush off the dust of every vain desire
 To-day you trampled under foot,
 Nor idly think that it will boot
To ponder o'er the past, heigh-ho ! Ah me !”
 Then Death calls calmly, “As you were.”

Reward.

Two women loved a scholar all his days,
A man whose soul was filled with dreams of peace,
A man to whom the world and all its ways,
Were empty babble, that ere long must cease.

One woman's life was pure as drifted snow,
The other's, soiled like snow that men have trod ;
One only knew through joy, the power of woe,
The other felt outcast from man and God.

One springtime, when the violet veil of morn
Was lifted from the opening eyes of day,
Upon the hope that with our life is born,
The scholar's soul in silence went away.

Within a year, the pure maid gave her heart
Unto a husband, and found Love's sweet grace ;
The other from the whole world drew apart,
And prays some day to see the scholar's face.

Mine Own.

On this great green earth below,
Naught is fairer well I know,
Be it sunshine, be it snow,
 Than mine own.

And the purest angel's dream
Could no fairer be, nor seem
Than the beauty I see beam
 On mine own.

I've forgotten to forget,
The first day when we two met,
My soul's dawn, shall it ere set,
 Mine, mine own?

Now my fairest joy that falls,
Soft as dreamy madrigals
Is, that your heart my heart calls,
 Mine, "Mine own."

Weighted down with hopes and fears,
Your heart swam these many years
Through a lake of bitter tears,
 Mine ! Mine own.

But the sunshine of your soul,
Made a golden aureole
On the waves that troubled roll,
 Mine, mine own.

Silence best can speak the praise
Of the wisdom of thy ways,
Of the beauty of thy days,

· Mine ! Mine own.

This wish from my heart I pray,
Angel ears may hear God say
On your first eternal day,

“ Mine, mine own.”

The Palace of Dead Hopes.

In lands of mist and mystery and phosphorescent light,
A sentry ghost treads up and down and guards by day and night,
The Palace of dead Hopes that once seemed fair to human sight.

A palace built of frozen tears, that fell from baby eyes
Upon the border-land of Time, when fresh from Paradise
They opened at the dawn of pain and opening were made wise.

There lie in state the Hopes, that once made music and made mirth,
Upon the everlasting fair adorable old earth,
Some old and wrinkled, some that drew their last breath at their birth.

Some died poor weaklings and the music in their hearts was dumb,
And some from overpraise went mad, and ah! alas, for some,
The taper-lights had flickered out and dawn had not yet come.

Pale Peace that claimed them left for gift their memories behind,
A fragrance faint that lingers still around Life's weary mind,
Balm giving as rose odors on a summer's dewy wind.

Down to that palace came, from where the seasons hold their sway,
With mien of stiff-kneed uprightness and dressed in drabbled gray,
A ghastly spectre, pale, with eyes that lacked the light of day.

At its approach a challenge fell upon the musty air—
A challenge from the sentry ghost “Halt ! answer who goes there” —
“My name is Doubt,” the spectre said, “the brother of Despair.”

“I know ye not ! what seek ye here upon this holy ground ? ”
Replied the ghost, a silence fell then through the silence, sound,
“The face of my great foe I seek, say, may he here be found ? ”

“Advance no further 'till ye give his name,” the sentry said—
“The Hope of Immortality,” moaned Doubt with bended head ;
Quick answer came, “Begone, thank God that Hope is not yet dead.”

The Devil's Dream.

The Devil, aweary once, fell asleep on
The bank of the river of tears,
And dreamed of the deeps of delight that were his
Ere Time was told off into years.

Ere man was yet made, or he made, to make man
See, good above all is the best,
When Law was called Love, and when Light lay on all
Like a crown, to rest upon rest.

Well, a vision of virtue from out of that past,
Like mist from a marsh of the sea,
Rose up in his dream, and seemed fair unto him
As of old,—and he yearningly

Smiled to it, leaned out his soul to it, when, lo !
A bird in a clump of dark oak,
Burst forth into song, and his vision was gone,
He heard it, and cursing awoke.

“Out, out on you bird,” he cried, “No song of yours
Again shall be heard in the light,
In the dark you shall mourn alone, and be called
The Nightingale—bird of the night.”

Thus came it that music with starlight was wed,
To herald an incoming morn,
For that bird by night sings even now “Out of
The Darkness called Death, Life is born.”

But the Devil with suffering upturned eyes,
Since waking at sound of that song,
In lone haunted places upon the wind cries,
“How long, oh my Master, how long?”

Did You But Know.

[FROM THE FRENCH.]

Ah, did you but know of the tears that I shed,
Because by my fireside there is no fond head,
Before my lone door you would walk, fancy led,
 You would pass—
 Did you but know.

Ah, did you but know all the look in your eyes
Calls to life in my weary heart heavy with sighs,
Just for once, as you passed, your beloved face would rise,
 You would glance—
 Did you but know.

Ah, did you but know of the joy that it brings,
For one heart to find that another heart clings
Close as life's life around it, poised on Love's wings
 You would linger—
 Did you but know.

Ah, did you but know that you were my heart's goal,
And of my deep love could you fathom the whole,
Perchance pure and maidenly, white arrayed soul,
 You would enter—
 Did you but know.

Resemblance.

[FROM THE FRENCH.]

Would you learn what good reason can be
For this infinite deep tenderness,
For this passionate longing ? Ah, me !
Vous ressemblez á ma jeunesse.

Your eyes that bewitch me now gleam
With a hope, then again with sadness ;
Ah, your whole life seems clad in a dream,
Vous ressemblez á ma jeunesse.

Your brow is as pure and as white
As Parian marble—spotless,
And crowned with a halo of light,
Vous ressemblez á ma jeunesse.

And I offer you humbly each day,
The love that consumes me, no less,
Unheeding you pass on you way,
Vous ressemblez á ma jeunesse.

Creation.

In vast and unimagined space,
Ere Life or Death was born,
Ere Time had lined the baby face
Of Hope, not yet forlorn.

On trailing clouds of sobbing sound,
God lay asleep and dreamed,
Upon His lips a soft breath found
The sigh word Love—it beamed

Forth into Light when He awoke,
And bade Creation come—
Wailing died Chaos as He spoke
The words “Behold Love’s home.”

The echo of the wailing cry
Tired hearts hear and call sorrow.
The Harper calls Love, Harmony.
The Painter calls Love, Beauty.
The Poet calls Love, God.

Alone.

A laughing child lay in the dawning light,
It claimed and called in ignorance it's own,
Divinely happy, and with beauty bright,
It hummed, "I'm happy, happy thus alone."

Alone we come into life, Ah, me !

Alone we enter eternity.

A man of might fought down his doubts and fears,
Though oftentimes they wrung from him a groan,
With noble pride he cried in later years,
"By Heaven's help I conquered them alone."

Alone we come into life, Ah, me !

Alone we enter eternity.

An aged man when near his rest, the day
That fearful friends around with prayer make moan,
Upraised his weary eyes for once to say,
"As I, so you, must seek the Truth alone."

Alone we come into life, Ah, me !

Alone we enter eternity.

Rest Thee.

Slumber my babe and rest thee awhile,
Night is for dreams and Day is for toil ;
 To-morrow thou wilt hear the birds sing
 Their welcome to the new-born day,
 To-night the peace that love and faith bring
 Will guard and keep thee safe I pray ;
Slumber, slumber, and troubles fly away,
Slumber, slumber, until the dawn of day.

Slumber my babe and rest thee awhile,
Night is for dreams and Day is for toil ;
 To-morrow dance within the sunlight
 That pours from out the heavens above,
 But through the watches of this calm night,
 Lie cradled, babe, within my love ;
Slumber, slumber, and troubles fly away,
Slumber, slumber, until the dawn of day.

Heigh-Ho.

A Dream built a nest on a branch of Desire,

(Heigh-Ho for Dream and Desire)

And Life over-head was a white ball of fire,

(Heigh-Ho for Dream and Desire)

It sang to a brood of bright Fancies it hatched,

And Love there with Love was so perfectly matched,

My Heart stood beneath them in silence and watched,

(Heigh-Ho for Dream and Desire).

My Heart full of Hope stretched itself in the shade,

(Heigh-Ho for Heart and for Hope)

It slept on a cushion that melody made,

(Heigh-Ho for Heart and for Hope).

But lo! when it woke there came tears to its eyes,

So slow was the Sun in the east to arise

So quick to return to its own Paradise,

(Heigh-Ho for Heart and for Hope.)

The Birds had all fled and the thin branch was bare,

(Heigh-Ho for Birds and for Branch)

The nest though disheveled was hanging still there,

(Heigh-Ho for Birds and for Branch).

A dull leaden cloud held its station above,

And soft, fleecy, fluttering feathers thereof

Were draping my heart in a white shroud of Love,

(Heigh-Ho for Birds and for Branch).

Watch Night.

To see another year,
Fall like a falling tear,
From Time's observing eyes,
The matron slowly went
To church, and with content
Dreamed dreams of Paradise.

The maiden by her side,
With trembling heart espied,
Her swain within his pew,
He whom she loved, I trow,
Above all else, and so
She kept a watch night too.

The one thought "It is there,
The joy beyond compare,
Of rest, abiding rest."
The other, "Bliss is here,
Within the glad New Year,
My head upon his breast."

Both fortified by Hope,
On dream-wings touched the scope
Of unalloyed bliss,
And from the "that-time" brought,
A sweet love-laden thought,
To brighten quietly this.

Two Songs.

Ambition sang loud in the morning,
A song to the music of strife,
It bade me be strong in the battle,
That men in their weakness call Life.

But Peace lifted low in the gloaming,
When dew and the long shadows fell,
It bade my tired heart lean on Patience
And whispered oft "Friend all is well."

A Child's Laughter.

Sweet, they say, the music that the seraph Israfel,
Strikes from out his heart's strings in the sun,
Sweeter far the laughter that melodiously fell,
From your lips, my bright-eyed little one.

Call it bubbling spirit out of Nature's mystic deep,
Or the young soul's thanksgiving and prayer,
Call it light made audible for mother's heart to keep,
Her one recompense from crowning care.

Call it what one will, yet, it is more than words can say,
Hope's own voice made true, and Truth's made glad,
Love's most perfect symphony, and Life's divinest lay,
Heaven's voice proclaiming "Be not sad."

Bless 'ed child, your laughter, will it change with changing years?
Pray its innocence may ne'er depart,
Let it be a symbol, christened by most tender tears,
Of the pure white goodness of your heart.

Words. Words. Words.

I am sick of weak-kneed nagging nothings,
So full-filled with regret and reform,
They whose loves are as vain as their loathings,
And whose thoughts at the best are lukewarm.

They have drugged the desires of ambition,
As an opiate deadens the brain,
And have stung spotless virtue's volition
With an irritant, itch-aching pain.

For what use then should I longer stay them,
These poor withered wasps of last night,
From the weeds, not the flowers, surely they came,
Not to beautify, only to blight.

Let us up then and off with the morning,
Let us fly, oh, my heart, let us fly,
To the lands that the dawn is adorning,
Where to live, is not daily to die.

Dear Heart.

Music, that trickles through brook-fairies fingers,
Stemming the ripples by sunbeams made bright,
Is not so pure, as a clear voice that lingers
On my soul's senses, unstrung with delight.

Air, that is tangled among orange blossom,
When Night with dew bathes the fair feet of Day,
Is not so sweet as the breath of her bosom,
Flowing from lips the Truth hallowes alway.

Silence, that was, ere the stars sang together
Heralding "Love and sweet Light and pure Law,"
Can alone tell in this hushed summer weather,
All my heart's love for her—all its deep awe.

Harmony.

The wind from the west and the sky covered over
With wavelets of cloud, a fair woman at rest
Beneath an oak tree in a field of sweet clover,
The hand on her neck of a babe at her breast.

A song on her lips and her head bended sidewise,
A lock of loose hair on her forehead half curled,
A smile o'er her face and the look in her calm eyes,
God gives unto mothers alone, in this world.

The music of Life thrilled her heart, as the child lipped
Her breast ; the warm air fell in murmuring song,
As bees from the cups of fair scent-laden flowers, sipped
Their sweetness a moment, then hurried along.

A bird overhead hushed its clear notes to listen,
A light-footed squirrel to look on advanced,
The sunbeams made even a gray stone to glisten,
A brook trilled its music, the leaves shadows, danced.

Spring.

When the primroses peep forth,
Braving winds from east and north,
And the rain comes helter-skelter with a ring,
When the birds are on the wing,
Much too occupied to sing,
Flirting, fluttering with their mates, then it is Spring.

When the ploughman plods along,
With a sweet old-fashioned song
On his lips, that happy memories must bring,
And a sense of child-like joy,
Makes a man feel like a boy,
As he breathes the keen, sweet air, then it is Spring.

When the clouds all scurry by,
In a far off opal sky,
And old ivy leaves no longer care to cling,
When a thrill runs through the air,
That all Nature seems to share,
And begins to smile forthwith at, it is Spring.

When the roads are moist we tread,
And a man holds high his head
With new life, all-be he commoner or king,
When the bees begin to think
Of the nectar they will drink
From the flowers that soon will come, then it is Spring.

An Autumn Idyl.

At a harvest home,
Like a brazen dome
Seemed the sky to the temple of Love,
With my barns well stored,
To the one adored
I said, "Share of the fullness thereof."

As a girl and boy,
We had known the joy,
Of a romp through the lush bending grass,
Then years rolled along,
Like a lilting song,
Until what I have told came to pass.

When I spoke, she stood,
And let fall her snood,
And a blush like a deep, damask rose,
Over-spread her face,
For a little space,
And I felt my soul tremble, God knows.

Then she crept so near,
I could kiss the tear,
That was christening the smile in her eyes,
And her twittering hand,
Said "You understand,"
Then I claimed her, my heart's holy prize.

So let others sing
Of the hopeful Spring,
Of the Summer that's wooed by the Sun,
But the Autumn's mine,
With its corn and wine,
And her smile that says "Lad, we are one."

Spero.

A QUESTION.

Out of the mists of the morning,
In the first dim dawn of the day,
A soaring lark sang near the sky,
“ Hope on, what is true cannot die,
And Beauty is with you alway.”

Out of the mists of my morning,
In the first dim dawn of my day,
Your soul, that to my soul is fire,
With flame for a voice, said “ Aspire,”
Shall they be as one yet, love, say ?

A DESIRE.

When the blazing torch of Beauty makes fair daylight on the land,
And the wind beats time to pulsings of the sea,
Let me feel clasped firmly in my own, your cool and tender hand,
As we boldly seek the Truth that makes us free.

When the altar lamps of Nature are hung out across the skies,
And the voices of the night sing low of peace,
Brighten all the gloom around me, with the lovelight in your eyes,
In my heart bid kindly Charity increase.

Credo.

WISDOM.

The knowledge of the harmony of things,
We learn in lessons, Sorrow kindly brings.

DUTY.

“What is Duty ?” cried Lucretius,
As he burst through Death’s pale door,
Then stood silent midst the wonders,
That are wonders evermore.

Could you speak to us, Oh, Master,
From the land where Faith hath trod,
Would you say “Oh, children, Duty,
Is to be at peace with God.”

COMFORT.

God wrote His litany on the leaves,
And gave the winds a voice to sing it,
To every soul that glads or grieves,
Or fears the fate that time will bring it.

A Maid O' the Mist.

A fair maid of the mist,
That no mortal had kissed,
Fell in love with the Man-in-the-Moon,
And beside the great sea,
In the night, plaintively,
Sang him this to a tear-laden tune.

“With the fullness of sorrow my soul is oppressed,
And I long for your valleys and caves,
Where the sound of men striving disturbs not your rest,
Tramping down through the mire to their graves.”

“Lift me up then and comfort me, take me I pray
To your arms, to your heart, lonely king,
And in caverns we'll hide from the fierce glare of day,
And at night on the mountains we'll sing.”

“With the joy that is born of a pure love fulfilled,
All my soul shall be thrilled through and through,
When as day-dawn approaches, the night winds all stilled,
I shall sink into slumber by you.”

At the sound of her voice,
Did his lone heart rejoice,
Did he yearningly whisper "My own?"
Round his home in the sky,
Where the dream-angels fly,
He engirdled a gold woven zone.

And sent down from his height,
A frail ladder of light,
Made from quivering beams of a star,
Then from earth the maid passed,
(Nor a backward look cast,)
To the moon's lonely regions afar.

The old ocean alone
Saw her go, and made moan,
Aye, and follows her still with its tide,
For its waves stretch their hands
To the far away lands,
Of the Man-in-the-Moon and his bride.

In that land of dead fires,
Is she past all desires,
Has her heart touched its uttermost scope,
And so far from earth's woes,
Is there perfect repose,
In a calm, above Fear, beyond Hope?

Love's Herbage.

(To B. D.)

A vine of Truth that flowers with smiles,
And is bedewed with tears !
O'er Wisdom's fathomless defiles
A vine of Truth that flowers with smiles,
Entwines its beauty, and beguiles
My heart of all its fears ;
A vine of Truth that flowers with smiles,
And is bedewed with tears.

To T. M.

Come tell us, pray, where did you get the grace,
Of that perennial youth that gilds your heart ?
Not surely in the sooty ways of men,
Where man is bought and sold as in a mart ;
Come tell us, pray.

How comes it that your heart to hope gives ear,
When everywhere vice cries out, trumpet loud,
“ Fair Virtue’s dead, her ghost, King Death, has wed,
And given her for a trousseau, his white shroud ; ”
How comes it so ?

Are you made strong within that home of yours,
Where she, the gracious mistress of old grace,
Sits by twin vital fountains of delight,
And with pure love bathes sorrow from your face.
Is it e’en so ?

Howe’er it is, it has been mine to know
And taste the kindness of your gen’rous soul,
It has been mine to hear you say “ God speed ”—
Now passing by your way I pay this toll—
Howe’er it is.

The First Born.

Oh, thou, the most white of the wonders, that wade
Through the dew-land of dawn,
Oh, perfect impression of purity, made
For my soul to lean on,
What dream or what deed in my life was so fair,
That the great God above
Sent thee to reward it and clarify care,
Oh, my lily-clad love?
Not, not that I think, that alone I was meant
By thy life to be blest,
I know as a Love-lamp for all, thou wert sent,
In humanity dressed,
To lighten, to brighten, and gently to shed
Helping Hope o'er their years,
And, crowned with a halo of smiles on thy head,
Teach the value of tears.
To speak to their hearts of the beauty of Truth,
Of the strength of true Faith,
And unto their souls in the dawn of thy youth
Show the meaning of Death.
So, now to be worthy thy presence most pure,
And thy gracious, glad face,
That they may abide, and through His time endure,
I beseech God for grace,

And wisdom and patience, illumined by Light ;
 These, for these do I pray,
To Him who made thee of the calm of the night
 And the glory of day.

Love and Life.

Your love is my daylight and came like the dawn,
 (Oh, Love and Oh, Life you are one)
To flush into glory my soul all your own,
 (Oh, Love and Oh, Life you are one).
All nature is now a divine paradise,
And fragrant as roses that blush with surprise,
When morning first opens her laughing blue eyes.
 (Oh, Love and Oh, Life you are one).

When time now before us has furrowed my brow,
 (Oh, Love and Oh, Life you are one),
Be the bond that shall bind us together as now,
 (Oh, Love and Oh, Life you are one).
Beyond the dark shadow that hangs between men,
And the lands that the weary heart sighing calls "Then,"
May a light shine to welcome us glorified, when
 All Love and all Life are as one.

The Scarecrow.

A scarecrow, in a field of corn,
 Stood broken down, well nigh,
But through the sunshine or the rain,
 His face still faced the sky.

The ravens filled with strange alarm,
 Flew by with startled cry,
When seeing 'tween his wind-tossed arms
 His face still faced the sky.

But once a dove from out a wood
 Came cooing forth a sigh,
Now, though the scarecrow yearned for love,
 His face still faced the sky.

And so he missed the love he sought,
 And soon he drooped to die,
Unheeded, broken, on the ground,
 His face still faced the sky.

The dove a mate soon found, indeed
 Why should she longer try
To win the scarecrow fallen low ;
 His face still faced the sky.

She took his heart of withered straw,
 To line her nest near by,
And scarcely noticed as she passed,
 His face *still* faced the sky.

The Weathercock.

A weathercock perched on an old church spire
Aloft and alone, far below
The world followed Duty or blind Desire,
Around were the free winds that blow,
(From where they will come who can know).

For years like a stoic he held his stand,
And felt the warm sunshine or snow,
North, south, east or west he was forced or fanned,
Around by the free winds that blow,
(From where they will come who can know).

The bashful new moon he had seen on high,
Like Love's shining shoulder aglow,
Emerge from an ocean of deep blue sky,
Unveiled by the free winds that blow,
(From where they will come who can know).

But never the weathercock's heart was stirred,
By aught that the seasons could show,
Till out of the darkness a haunting word
Was brought by the free winds that blow,
(From where they will come who can know).

And lo ! where the east by the west is met,
 Were lilies of fire bending low
Before the wan face of divine Regret,
 Sharp stung by the free winds that blow,
 (From where they will come who can know).

And since then, blow whither it will the wind,
 The weathercock turns to and fro
Unsatisfied, aching again to find
 That face, in the free winds that blow,
 (From where they will come who can know).

The Price of a Song.

Long he lived in a tenement house,
But the flooring he trod on up there,
Was the ceiling that others below,
Looked aloft to in doubt and despair.

He had sung of the fields and the flowers,
Of the dusk and the dawn and mid-day,
Of the star-beams embroid'ring the sky,
Of the sea where the waves are at play.

Yet for all of his songs he had starved,
And he cried in despair, "Oh, renew,
God, my strength, to bid men lift their eyes
To the fair face of Truth, bathed in dew."

And a thought, like a wave on the shore,
Seemed to rush o'er his mind, parched and dry,
A command, as it were, Duty gave,
To interpret the city's hoarse cry.

So he wrote a great soul-stirring song,
From the jumble and jar of the street,
From the whirring of unceasing wheels,
And the onrush of unresting feet.

And the meaning of Life was made clear,
 Why the struggle is needed for strength,
And a haven of Love hove in sight,
 Where the restless shall find rest at length.

Then the multitude crowded to crown
 The poor poet, unnoticed 'till then,
But they found, ere they came, watchful Death
 From his fingers had taken the pen.

And the mandate again was fulfilled,
 Old as Hope's baby whispers of Heaven,
That before a new song can be sung,
 For that song first a life must be given.

A Prisoner.

I plucked a crop of kisses from the garden of your face,
And took them to a prisoner I know,
For thirty years and over at a steady thudding pace,
In doubt, he has been trudging to and fro.

But when I took your kisses he fell trembling with surprise,
And at your name stopped, with a sudden start,
And then his lonely cell became to him a Paradise;
The prisoner, dear lady, is my heart.

The Crucified Cupid.

When roses and forget-me-nots
And lilies shed perfume,
And in the hedges round the plots,
The nests were in full bloom.

When every spear of grass was dipped
In a nepenthe bowl,
And fleecy clouds, with wings unclipped,
Coquetted with the Soul.

Prince Cupid's little sweetheart came
Within dull sorrow's ken,
And thought she only had to name
Her name to maids and men,

And then, the verdant earth would seem
As fair as Heaven afar,
And round each life a peace would gleam,
Like silence round a star.

The thought of what had been, would be
As discord to a tune,
And hearts, as free as is the sea,
Would turn to her, their moon.

The beauty then of Holiness,
Be manifest indeed,
The holiness of Beauty, less
A fancy, more a creed.

The struggling soul, in manhood's breast,
Would never meet mishap,
But when tired out would sink to rest,
In neighbor Nature's lap.

Alas ! Alack ! poor little thing,
On gentle errand bent,
With music of the spheres to sing,
And quick with good intent.

How could she know that Lust was here,
With subtle, scheming mind,
Begemmed and jewelled with many a tear
Wrung from deceived mankind.

When she came here, he whispered, "Vain
Is all she has to say,
The rose will fade, the thorn remain,
Drink deep then while ye may."

And man deluded, anger stirred,
Crushed down his half regrets,
And, "Crucify her !" was the word,
"On stacked up bayonets."

But maddened at her pleading voice,
With ruthless hands they slew
The babe, that said, "Oh, men rejoice,
The good you see is true."

And there with outstretched wings she hung,
Her curls a golden grace,
Around the pitying smile, that clung
Like dew to her dead face.

Since that sore day Prince Cupid flies,
An arrow in his hand,
And smites with pain, that never dies,
The children of the land.

Love.

A glowing moment hung 'twixt two Eternities ;

 A finger-post that points to Life's increase ;

A winning smile upon the lips of Truth it is ;

 A Light that leads up to the paths of Peace.

Unless.

Oh, Love ! Oh, Love ! can'st thou not see,
 My heart for thee now breaks,
By day and night it thinks of thee,
 All other thought forsakes ;
My heart that as a shield, would guard
 Thy heart from every foe,
My heart that from all hope is barred,
Unless it as a shield, may guard,
 Thy heart from every foe.

Oh, Love ! Oh, Love ! could'st thou but know,
 My life is all thine own,
Thou would'st not surely pass it so,
 It would not be unknown.
My life that would a message send,
 Thy life to make more glad,
My Life that must take Death for friend,
Unless it can a message send,
 Thy life to make more glad.

Oh, Love ! Oh, Love ! can'st thou not feel
My soul's delight in thine,
The angels see it prostrate kneel,
To thine as to a shrine.
My soul that as a light would shine,
For thine on Sorrow's Sea ;
Ah, tears must dim this soul of mine,
Unless it as a light may shine,
For thine on Sorrow's Sea.

The High Life.

GOOD MORNING.

Ah ! Good morning ! Clear sky !
Long the way I must go ;
Yes, the mountain is high,
But, good morning, clear sky,
Must surmount, and must try,
The crowd travel too slow ;
So, good morning ; clear sky ;
Long the way I must go.

GOOD NIGHT.

Ah ! Good night ! Glad we met ;
On the valley lies mist,
Those behind I regret,
But, good night, glad *we* met,
It was worth all the fret
To be once by you kissed ;
So, good night ; glad we met,
On the valley lies mist.

He and She.

Say what can fairer be, my lass,
Oh, what can fairer be,
Than wind among the bending grass,
A-tripping, lingering, rustling pass,
To dance wi' waves at sea ?

Oh, think thee it is fairer, lad,
Say can it fairer be,
Than toddling bairnies wi' their dad,
Both making hearts and homes more glad,
Wi' heavens purity?

Christmas.

When the mistletoe's white and the holly is red,
 And the snow keeps the old earth warm,
Then old Christmas comes in with his hoary bent head,
When the mistletoe's white and the holly is red,
And both peace and good will to all men, it is said,
 Ring the chimes with a cheery charm,
When the mistletoe's white and the holly is red,
 And the snow keeps the old earth warm.

A Song For My Children.

Hark ! in the East how the silence is broken,
Down from the gates of the Night drops the bar,
Lo ! the wind shakes, from the Dawn's trailing garments,
Gold flakes of glory, like seeds of a star.
Over the West hang the curtains of darkness,
Solemnly screening the sphinx-face of Fate,
'Twixt Dusk and Dawn, as between two Eternals,
Here for a space we stand hopeful, elate.

Visions of Love, crowned with lotus and laurel,
Vanish as mist in the ambient air,
Up from the earth there ascends sound and odor,
Like a pure incense-winged passionate prayer.
Legends and lore, that Immortals have chanted,
Lift up our minds to unspeakable joy,
While to the sense, that is over the senses,
Whispers the voice of The Carpenter Boy.

Thrilled through and through with desire to be hearing
Duty's divine undefinable call,
Breathless we wait, and with wonder and worship,
Know we are part of the Infinite All.
But hold, Oh, heart ! o'er the wide fields of Heaven,
From East to West morning's light is unfurled,
Shout, shout aloud then, a full-throated pean,
"God's in His Heaven, all's well with the world."

The Ballad of Silence.

The Sun shook out his gold red hair,
And in the downy, dreamy west,
Bent low his Titan head in prayer,
Ere sinking down in state to rest ;
Then o'er the fields in twilight dressed,
The dusky siren Silence crept,
Safe hidden in her tawny breast,
The mystery of Fate was kept.

She held within her finger tips,
Brought from a faded eastern clime,
A musk-rose from a mummy's lips,
That to her own, from time to time
She pressed, when some heart-throb sublime
Sought utterance, for those who wept,
Who saw that in no empty rhyme
The mystery of Fate was kept.

A flock of bats around her head,
In interwoven circles flew,
Mayhap with message from the dead,
Beyond the fields of dawn and dew ;
Or were they souls the world once knew,
Who, while they should have watched, but slept,
And so forever from their view,
The mystery of Fate was kept.

Ah ! brothers, who are more than kind,
When Time's encircling wall is lept,
Shall we not say " Lest we grew blind,
The mystery of Fate was kept."

Dear Cuddling Kate.

Dear cuddling Kate, your present age,
When it is written on Time's page,
As multiplied by eight or nine,
You'll think yourself a lady fine,
Dear cuddling Kate.

And many a one, I do engage,
Will think your smile an ample wage,
For aught you ask in shade or shine,
Dear cuddling Kate.

Your sparkling eyes shall be the wine,
That ne'er a stoic would decline ;
Your simplest ribbon be a gage
Of love, to some young knightly sage,
Who, then, will deem your heart his shrine,
Dear cuddling Kate.

To an Old Tune.

To an old tune, a thought arose
Just now, upon the wind that blows
From out the lands, where fairies keep
The secrets of primeval sleep,
To an old tune.

A thought that takes me where it goes
To Love, that blossoms like a rose,
Beside the song of waters deep,
To an old tune.

A kindly thought to come, God knows,
When many troubles interpose,
And best laid plans have fall'n aheap,
O'er all it takes me at a leap ;
Shall my life gently near its close
To an old tune ?

A Country Lane.

A country lane ! what thoughts arise !
A boyhood's brief sweet Paradise,
A glimpse of Hope uncrowned by Fear,
A time when Heaven to earth seemed near,
A country lane !

Who has not watched with wistful eyes,
Unheedful of the cowherds cries,
The clouds creep, crack, then lift and clear,
A country lane.

Who says that naught of solace lies
Within the thought of lanes, implies
That all is centered now and here,
That life is but a falling tear ;
Shall Time seem to him when he dies
A country lane ?

The Bitter Cup.

The bitter cup, if it be mine
To drink, and leave the fragrant wine
Untasted, Lord then make me strong
To drink it, as mine ears a song,
The bitter cup.

Think not I murmur nor repine,
Because I pray as He did, Thine,
“Let it pass from me without wrong,
The bitter cup.”

Well, well I know the crystal line
Of highest lives, drank it for sign
Of freedom, from the fears that throng
Round us, while we to Time belong,
They drained its dregs, nor did decline
The bitter cup.

A Ruined Name.

A ruined name ! How came it so ?
In this wise, or, I do not know—
I loved and gave myself away,
And then I heard the whole world say,
 “Out on you ! shame !”—

When wooed in accents soft and low,
I sternly should have answered, go !
I would not then have had to-day
 A ruined name ?

But if desire be fair or no,
In burning passion's ruddy glow,
Eyes cannot see, try how they may,
Alas ! in aftercalm's cold gray,
They read where shivering shadows grow,
 A Ruined Name.

The Meanest Man.

The meanest man that ever trod
This great, green, vast, law-governed sod,
Had thoughts in him as pure as snow
That mountain clouds embrace, although
The meanest man.

Pure thoughts, that neither need to nod
Nor blush before the gaze of God,
Tombbed in the lowest of things low,
The meanest man.

Not as a staff, but as a rod,
Thoughts came to drive him from the broad
Way unto everlasting woe—
That is the reason, would ye know,
They torture as a plague or prod,
The meanest man.

When I Was Young.

“ When I was young,” old Christmas said,
“ And o’er the earth began to tread,
The tears of Pan fell on the snow,
And turned to seeds of mistletoe,
When I was young.”

“ With bleeding limbs the Dryads fled
From out the woods, and berries red
On holly bush began to grow,
When I was young.”

“ And then a strange report was spread,—
That laughing Cupid’s curl-crowned head
Should in my presence be bent low,
That I would break his pagan bow;—
I took him for my friend instead,
When I was young.”

I Sing Hurrah !

I sing hurrah ! for this bright lot,
Shakespeare and Byron, Burns and Scot,
Four men to whom the good luck fell,
To look at Heaven and laugh at Hell,
I sing hurrah !

They did not care a single jot
For unessentials, and they got
The joy that comes from work done well,
I sing hurrah !

They sang of Truth and for it fought,
“The Truth,” they cried, “the Truth or naught,”
In voice as clear as silver bell,
A voice that casts o’er men a spell
And lifts them up to it’s high thought ;
I sing hurrah !

At Maiden Lane.

At Maiden Lane and Bedford Street,
I've known a few good fellows meet,
Who knew the wisdom of the heart,
Why smiles arise and tear-drops start,
At Maiden Lane.

I've felt the hand of friendship greet
The weary brother, storm-beat,
And bruised within the cruel mart,
At Maiden Lane.

Indeed, my life were incomplete
I feel, had I not known the sweet
Companionship, that soothed the smart
Of many a buffet borne for art,
While humbly following her feet,
At Maiden Lane.

An Ideal.

Behind a veil of rose-mist stands a Dream,
 A broad-winged smile across her visage skims,
 No faintest blemish her fair body dims,
Nor ever tears upon her eyelids gleam ;
She is a blaze of beauty, like a beam
 Of Light the Sun sends earthward, glory rims
 The utmost shadow of her lithesome limbs,
More shapely than the mind of man may deem :

And though the strongest songs he ever sang,
 Like flames aspiring from a bed of fire,
 Die out before they reach her pearl-paved place,
Yet does he strive, unheedful of Time's fang,
 To greet the goddess of his great desire,
 To kiss her feet and gaze upon her face.

The Ideal.

Within a perfect circle of pure light,
 More brilliant than the blaze of brightest Sun,
 Above desiring for herself, stands one,
Self-centered, with white lilies all bedight ;
And knowing all makes use of her great might,
 To lift the lowly, and leave lonely none
 Who seek for Truth, while yet there sands may run
Through passion's day or penitence's night.

And though on earth our minds may not conceive,
 How passing perfect is her peerless face,
 Forth flashing glory, garnered from her soul,
Yet in Life after life, we do believe,
 That we shall gaze upon her crowned with grace,
 And in her presence grow complete and whole.

Poverty.

Hail! Poverty, severe as thou art great,
Thou mighty midwife of eternal minds,
Accept the homage of a man, who finds
In thee the handmaid of omniscient Fate ;
I, weakling of thy blood, am no ingrate,
And while I live will praise thee, who unbinds
The body from the soul, and sifts and grinds
The good from bad, and gives to each, estate.

Out, on the little crew who call thee cursed,
Fed on a silver spoonful of delight,
They never in thy rugged arms were nursed,
Or heard the beating of thy heart by night ;
What if they quaff the wine of pleasure? Thine,
The milk of human kindness; drink divine.

.

Death.

My name is Death, some know me as the Dawn,
Upon the western walls of Time I stand,
Before men's eyes I wave a magic wand,
With "*unknown change*" they say writ large thereon ;
Weak men whose souls with fearful doubts are gnawn,
Catch sight of me and smile, the strong are fanned
By music from the movement of my hand,
And into seeming peace are gladly drawn.

Yet none shall learn the mysteries that lie
Behind my back, until they cease to see
The green, grey garment of the things that be,
And all the white-winged wonders of the sky.
Enough to know and this unasked I give,
I guard the home of Hope for all who live.

Dante and Another.

Italia's weary Ishmaelite of song, .

To find the one his lonely soul desired—

Bitter his bread was and his feet were tired

Treading the steps of servitude so long—

Passed through the Inferno's circle of doomed wrong,

Through Purgatorio's woeful climbing mass,

And clear in Paradiso's fields of grass,

Saw her, the crowned queen of the singing throng.

O'er dew drenched hills of heavenly mem'ries, I

Am led in sleep to one that was so fair,

Down through the land where Doubt clouds up the sky,

And Hope hears whispered in its ear "despair!"

Startled at sound of Hell's far piercing cry,

I look and see her poor soul rotting there.

Heart to Heart.

For many a day I strove to weave a cage,
From thoughts that grew at naming of thy name,
Best known to me but not unknown to Fame,
Who smiling o'er it, writes it on her page ;
But when my mind would in this task engage,
A soft delicious Dream, wing-clad, makes claim
On its attention, saying, "Whence she came
I go, come join me in my pilgrimage."

Yet fain would I that cage complete, and close
Therein a singing bird, whose song should be
As fresh as kisses to the land from sea,
And warm as perfume from a perfect rose.
"What songster Sir," you say, "has such an art?"
Hush ! tell it to your heart, "It is his heart."

Edwin Booth.

“No man bears sorrow better,” so he spoke
One night, when for a noble, solemn space,
The soul of Brutus lay upon his face ;
And at his voice the sleeping Past awoke,
And, that he never passed beneath the yoke
Of self, in home life or in public place,
These words seem like an epitaph of grace,
Carved on Ygdrasil, Time’s symbolic oak.

Where does his message point, oh, brothers mine,
Who sometimes see beyond the prison bars
Of Fate, the gleaming of immortal stars
Of Truth still through the night of waiting shine ?
In reverence, bending low with bated breath,
The answer takes us back to Nazareth.

Mary Anderson.

We give you thanks because you paint with light
The high lights of existence, these the pure,
Who tried by tempting Time, withstand sin's lure
And lash, and at the end are found upright ;
Hermione and Perdita and bright
Blythe Rosalind and Juliet can cure
Care-wounded hearts that weep, and lift them sure
To mountain tops of Hope, where Love's in sight.

Let others paint but shadows if they will,
The shadows sin casts on their paltry life ;
You, and you must, can take us over strife
To Peace, that passeth understanding still,
Can take us to a land of clearer air,
Where even Duty's hard face seemeth fair.

Ellen Terry.

Fair follower of the feet of Fancy, clad
 In clinging robes of ample, antique grace,
 Dear dreamer of the Future's human face;
Whose eyes now dashed with gracious tears, now glad
With Love's own light, are never wholly sad,
 For well have they discerned, past Time and Space,
 And all the finite phantoms that men chase,
A goal, where good shall triumph over bad.

True artiste in the all embracing art,
 Wherein the vitalest of minds have wrought,
 Sweet spendthrift of the knowledge genius brought—
The inner workings of the human heart ;—
 How shall I praise thee without conscious blame ?
 By saying, Life is coupled with thy name ?

A Brother.

Above all vain desirings, greatly calm,
 Brother, your life towers visible to men,
 Self-centered in the truth of things, again
A noble soul by silence scatters sham—
Yea, in your shadow falls a dewy balm
 For those who can escape the prison pen
 Of self, who can, when Truth speaks, say “amen,”
And hear, as you have heard, great Nature’s psalm.

Doubtless your heart has drunk the bitter cup,
 When what was best you saw discredited,
 And laurels placed upon the worthless head,
And heard the voice of folly lifted up ;
 Natheless you shunned the plaudit-loving school,
 And wooed with winning voice, the Beautiful.

An Actress.

As fresh as Dawn, arrayed in grey and gold,
When tripping lightly o'er a mobile sea,
As calm as Dusk, dream-laden, silently
Enticing weary minds into her fold ;
So is that art of thine by Love made bold,
Upholding Life's best mirror, for the free
To gaze on and see there—Humanity,
The same at heart e'en now as 'twas of old.

Yet still behind the art stands strong and clear,
A gracious, tender personality,
A winning smile of sweet simplicity,
An open-handed heart that offers cheer,
A soul, a something, I may not define,
And yet that "*something*," lady, we call thine.

The Oldest Art.

A David's harp unto the soul of Saul,
Is she, the oldest, vitalest of arts,
To all tormented, striving, human hearts,
Hemmed in and shadowed o'er by Time's dark wall ;
In her clear voice, did not the wisest call,
Sad Æschylus of old, and Sophocles—
The leaders of the world in wisdom's ways—
And William Shakespeare, greatest of them all?

Oh, God ! how grand a thing for one to know,
That in the mighty harness they have made,
And led in reverence by the lines they hold,
He strives to drag away the weight of woe,
That sin and ignorance upon men laid,
And bound there with the cursed love of gold.

Tempus Fugit.

I.

The darkest hour had passed, but still a gloom
Lay on the snow-clad streets, the feet of day
Were slowly climbing up the orient way,
And Dawn was whisp'ring to the Dusk, "make room ;"
From street to street, as 'twere the voice of doom,
The watchman called the hours, and thin the ray
Of light his lamp shed forth, far, far away,
The Months were waiting wherein buds would bloom.

Unto the ear of one but half awake,
The solemn call proclaimed Time's passing flight,
And of the hours that still remained of night,
Before the morrow came to mar or make ;
Then to himself he said, "What best I can
I will be, and pray God, that be a man."

II.

Like a thin flame that flutters into space,
 That hour a soul went forth and left the earth,
 To seek the sum of all its active worth,
And in the centre of Illumined Grace,
See, full and fair, the Great Truth, face to face,
 So, having left behind the murk and mirth,
 That had encased it since its first time-birth,
Stand free and fearless in the heavenly place.

A wand'ring wind brought down its passing word,
 And told it to a baby that 'gan weep—
 And woke its mother from a peaceful sleep,
Wherein a dream was twittering like a bird—
 A message, half a song and half a sigh,
 “Ah, child, learn early, Time flies not, we fly.”

Hereditv.

Hereditv's the line that binds us to the sod,
Or draws us surely up into the heart of God.

A restless outlaw left the city's din,
And sought, he knew not why, in green clad fields,
The rest, quiet Nature to her children yields,
Sore burthened by their heavy hearts within ;
By chance he met, or e're the night set in,
A maiden, with the dawn's light in her eyes,
Who listened to his voice in mute surprise,
And loved him for his strength and knew no sin.

Back to the city went the lawless man,
And by his side this woman, whose soft words
Were sweeter than the music of song birds,
Who bore a child and suffered for a span ;
Then heard the Voice that bids all sorrows cease,
So, smiling, passed into the land of Peace.

II.

From her son's son, in half a hundred years,
 A cripple came, whose body held a soul,
 That paid to Time, in silence, the grim toll
Revengeful Fate had fashioned out of tears—
A soul that rose above all body's fears,
 And felt a calm, beyond its own control
 To mar or make, directing to the goal
Where perfect Life, Love's perfect music hears.

An erring father's sins we know shall pass
 Unto his children's children, may not these
 Fair virtues of our mothers still come back?
And bring with them the perfume of the grass,
 The lisp of leaves on consecrated trees,
 The feeling for the Infinite we lack.

Liberty, Equality, Fraternity.

Lo, in the east, crowned with the rising sun,
Confucius spoke, "Through Law comes Liberty,
Through what ye are not, learn ye what to be,
Through what ye may not, learn what should be done ;"
And down the ages rang that voice, 'till one,
Prince Buddah, before whom men bowed the knee,
Stepped down to them and said, " Equality,
Yea, in Nirvana, out of pure souls spun."

Last came the crystal-clear absorbing Christ,
Above all others, faultless, fair and free,
Saying, "Our Father," claimed Fraternity,
And to make good that claim, with death made tryst ;
Each lived the thought that to the world he taught,
And worshipped God by works that he had wrought.

To G. R. S.

ON THE DEATH OF HIS MOTHER.

Across the din and smoke of this dim spot,
I send a voice that fain would reach your ear,
A voice that fain would melt into a tear,
And drop like dew into your heart, and blot
Quite out the grief that now must be your lot,
As silently you kneel beside the bier
Of her, who now has done with yearn or year,
And knows the things that are, aye, and are not.

But, in the presence of the conqu'ring Calm,
Has not a dawn-robed Hope already come,
And dropped a thought into your mind, in some
Mysterious way, a satisfying balm?
A thought that silently doth seem to say,
"Death is but Birth, Night cometh before Day."

Hamlet Born.

Beside the couch where his young girl-wife lay,
In trembling pity Denmark's good King stood,
The King forgotten in the father's mood,
While wiping from her brow the damp away ;
Upon the throne, deserted for that day,
Mad Yorick sat in silence, sad, alone,
With dreams and fancies, had the world but known,
It might have laughed or wept at, one dare say.

Outside, old Death stood by the wild, joy fires,
Hamlet, that hailed thy birth, and at their blaze
Warming his withered hands, foresaw thy days,
Foresaw the end of shameless sin's desires,
Foresaw thy anxious soul's sore misery,
And smiling to himself said, "H-m, for me."

Shylock Dead.

Alone and broken-hearted, with the dew
Of Death upon his eyelids and his eyes—
The mist that hangs on this side Paradise—
He called upon the Mighty One he knew,
The God of Abraham and Isaac, who
Could come to him, on flaming wings of fire,
And grant at last his weary soul's desire,
So let him die as he had lived—a Jew.

Where his long suffering tribe no base badge wear,
But walk in shining robes of glory drest,
Where psalms and songs float ever on the air,
Old Shylock sought and found eternal rest ;
Found her he long had yearned for, waiting there,
Found sweet content and peace, on Leah's breast.

Algernon Charles Swinburne.

Hail, matchless maker of rich rhythmic thought,
Whose ear has listened to the gray-lipped sea,
And caught its mighty pulsing melody,
And learned its subtle secrets, safely brought
From days when Sophocles and Sappho wrought,
From vine-crowned days, when laughing joyously
The Soul discerned the Body's symmetry,
And Beauty was the blessing all men sought.

Ah, but the voice of Villon, too, you heard,
And all the singers of his after time,
When sigh on sigh smiled into rippling rhyme,
Spontaneous as the music of a bird ;
Then, taught thereat, you sang as you best can,
The pain and pleasure, hope and scope of man.

Sorrow's Crown.

Like to a bird that's drifted far from land,
A bird, whose mate still twitters in the trees,
Not dreaming of that heart upon the seas,
Beating its life out in a struggle grand,
To reach again the golden-grain'ed sand ;
Nor nest, nor nestling it again ere sees,
But with glazed eyes, it thinking still of these,
Sinks down into the hollow of God's hand.

So is that man, who for a short life's space,
On finite wings of puny thought, does roam
Afar from Truth, and Truth is Beauty's home,
Who seeks to cross the Infinite, and trace,
By seeming facts, the mystery of fate,
But dies at last while crying out—too late.

Hope Deferred.

Oh, heavy eyes that ache with unshed tears,
Fixed steadfast on the blaze of a Belief,
A Shadow, like an ancient god's grey grief,
Has lain upon your lids these many years ;
Poor quivering lips, nigh parted by the fears
That fain would laugh between, not yet relief
For you, not yet, in an intense, bright brief,
Full flushed, triumphant kiss, when Truth appears.

Is it great wonder that the once strong heart
Has grown numbed, nerveless, in the dim twilight
Of unremunerative Time? the bite
Of Death would welcomed be, for blood would start
Once more in a red rush, we're but to cease
And be absorbed in an unconscious peace.

Duty's Kiss.

When Life from Love accepts rough Labor's yoke,
And strives to climb the upward, narrow path,
Temptation lined and rugged as a strath,
Why does a smile, like Prospero's bright cloak,
Hang round that Life, yea, though its heart be broke?
Is it the thought of heavenly aftermath,
A better gleanings than the moment hath,
Begot of firm belief in what Hope spoke?

Art-workers answer, "Beauty's face we see,
And in her smile are decked, and by it led;"
But others trudging on to join the dead,
Find cause for wonder in such ecstasy,
And I! I cannot answer why it is,
But somehow think, that smile is Duty's Kiss.

Idle Words.

The idle empty words that I may speak,
Where go they on the boundless sea of sound,
What shall they seem, when presently I round
Life's utmost jagged tempest-riven peak ?
Shall this lie rotting like a wreck aleak,
And that, like flying-fish make sudden bound
Truth-winged, to sink into the deeps profound,
And wear a rusty smile that seems to creak.

Some day I know that they shall all be met,
Each one a vacant-eyed reproachful elf,
Grinning in chorus, "Lo ! I am thyself
Forgotten, now forgetting to forget"—
Ah, brother ! wound me not with mocking laugh,
Is God less mighty than a phonograph ?

Talent.

Within the circus ring of circumstance,
 In tarnished trapping, many years since, brought
 By conquest from the Arab tents of Thought,
An ambling Soul is made to pace or prance,
Kneel, nod, or caper in a clever dance,
 Aye, in a word, show all the little lot
 Of laughing tricks, that even done are naught,
And scarce worth Fate, the great ring-master's glance.

Yet, in the intervals between the play,
 A wild desire, to be for once quite free,
 To roam at large, to browse beneath the tree
Of Knowledge, comes and stings as gad-fly may ;
 Still, nimbly, when the next performance comes,
 It answers to the call of trump and drums.

Peccavi.

Oh, sweet Immortals, ye whose lives are white,
 Among whose shining ranks I hoped to stand,
 When dreaming youth with Love walked hand in hand
Across the scented fields of morning light;
Astray, and straying past recall and sight
 Of even your melodious bright band,
 My wandering feet are caught in the quick-sand
Of Death, and hopeless change in changeless night.

Not from the rocks of earth, but from the flint,
 Hard hearts of men an echo, to my call,
 For help, comes, mocking my soul's funeral,
With vain, vain repetitions without stint;
 Is there no hope through all eternity?
 Peccavi, God-'a mercy e'en on me.

Playing with Fire.

She tossed, from hand to hand, with juggler's skill,
For many a year the burning hearts of men,
And watched with half-shut eyes them quiver, when
They fluttered past each other to fulfill
Her filip's orbit, inattentive till,
With quickened touch, again and yet again
In closing circles they would blaze, and then
To ashes turn, consumed with thoughts that kill.

But gazing on those fatal lights so long—
Although mischance as yet did never mar
With blis'tring burn or an unseemly scar,
Her peerless face that still is as a song—
Her eyes have lost the precious power to see
The line of Beauty in Simplicity.

A Vague Report.

If haply one might pass the bourne of dross,
 Of futile strife, of dead unfinished deeds,
 Of jangling jealousies, of barren creeds,
Of dreamy quagmires overgrown with moss;
And, casting all aside, ne'er count it loss
 Again, but, following where Love still leads,
 Would he hear suddenly, amid green meads,
The voice of Conscience preaching with her Cross?

So, in the haunted chambers of unrest,
 Where fevered Life gropes blindly for release,
 And cheats itself with will-o'-wisps of peace,
A rumor runs, that racks each tortured breast
 With strivings to recall resplendent days
 When Hope, with peering eyes, spoke words of praise.

Dream-Pastures.

A flock of Dreams in dignified repose,
 Within the flowering pastures of her face,
 Where Faith has set the light of mystic grace,
Lie waiting for the voice of Him who knows
The lonely peaks of Truth, o'ercapped with snows
 That warmly shelter the pure hiding place
 Of Love, waiting for yet a little space
For Him, whose voice shall somehow seem a rose.

Ah, brother, somewhere on your holy quest,
 To-night you travel on to meet the light,
 Could you but hear my call, fleet as thought's flight,
Your feet would bring you here, and as a guest
 Full welcome, you would join the song those Dreams
 Strike from the harp-strings of divine star-beams.

Marriage.

Within the lonesome depths of awful night,
I met the wild barbaric Past of me,
Firm-jawed and fearless, unabashed and free,
And deathless prayers and passions flashed a light
From out Her level eyes, that straight did smite
My listening soul with question "Shall you be,
Or through a dawnless dim eternity
With unavailing shadows take your flight?"

Quick from the central confines of my soul,
A voice rose clearly in commanding calm,
"Beloved, kiss me and behold I am,
Yea, but embrace me we are one and whole."
Strange, now adown the dream-lit aisles of space
I see the Future watching with Her face.



*What shall be said of these few songs of mine ?
Shall they be likened unto scentless weeds,
That grew within the garden land of Thought,
All blossomless, nor in their veins the wine
Of dreams, that quaffed, stirs up to noble deeds,
Whereby mankind to Beauty's shrine is brought ?*

*Even so; yet for these weeds some use may be,
Some use, at last, in thrifty Nature's way—
Who portions out the dark and daylight hours—
Within her crucible of silence, she
May crush them through the changes of decay,
To feed at last the roots of fragrant flowers.*

DONALD ROBERTSON, Actor..

